

XVII.—*Obituary.*

WE have heard with great regret of the sudden death of our fellow-member, Mr. E. Gibson, whose last paper filled much of the January number. Living as he did to a great extent in South America, he was not so much among us as most of our contributors, but his memory was kept green by a series of articles contributed to 'The Ibis' from 1879 to the present time. They all deal with the ornithology of Argentina and its neighbours; for instance, one was entitled "Ornithological Notes from Buenos Ayres," another "Notes on the Birds of Paysandu, Republic of Uruguay." Mr. Gibson was also much concerned in Selater and Hudson's 'Argentine Ornithology,' while his work was always characterized by great thoroughness and fullness of detail. At such places as the head-station at Yngleses, within reach of the coast as well as the interior of the country, he was specially well posted for general observation of migratory or of residential birds. In fact, it will be exceptionally difficult to fill the place of so expert a field-naturalist in that district of the Southern Hemisphere. He died on October 26, 1919.

XVIII.—*Notices of recent Ornithological Publications.**Bangs on the Jungle-Fowl and a new Hawk.*

[The Name of the Common Jungle Fowl. By Outram Bangs and Thomas Edward Penard.

A new Red-shouldered Hawk from the Florida Keys. Proc. New Eng. Zool. Club, vol. vii. pp. 23-25, 35.]

In the first article the authors discuss the nomenclature of the three subspecies of *Gallus*. They conclude that *Gallus gallus* is applicable to the Bengal form, and must not be rejected.

In the second paper Mr. Bangs describes a new subspecies (*Buteo lineatus extimus*) from Florida.

Bonhote on the destruction of Migratory Birds in Egypt.

[Bird-liming in Lower Egypt. By J. Lewis Bonhote: with an Introduction by Major Flower. Cairo, 1919. Pp. i-ii, 1-9 (Ministry of Public Works, Egypt).]

In this paper the author and Major Flower inveigh against the wholesale massacre of the smaller birds on the northern Egyptian coasts, which is so prevalent at Damietta and Rosetta, though nearly stopped at Alexandria. They describe the methods of using bird-limed twigs or reeds at the spots where the flocks of migrants usually alight, and descant on the harm done by killing the species which are useful in destroying injurious insects. The Agricultural Department is doing its best to end the traffic with Europe in small birds; but it is very difficult to watch the districts involved efficiently, or to suggest effective means of prevention.

Boubier on the Migration of Birds.

[Les cinq Éventails de Migration des Oiseaux de la Faune Paléarctique. By Maurice Boubier. Geneva, 1919 (extract from Bull. Soc. Zool. Genève).]

The author, having gathered all possible information on the species of birds which migrate southwards from the palearctic area, concludes that they move in five fan-shaped arrangements. His facts seem accurate and are carefully considered, but his deductions lose much of their value from the fact that he has omitted in his argument a great part of western South Africa, with the whole of Australia and the South Seas.

Coward on British Birds.

[The Birds of the British Isles and their Eggs. By T. A. Coward. First Series (Corvidæ to Sulidæ). London, 1919. Pp. i-vii, 1-376; 242+65 pls.]

Mr. Coward is certainly to be congratulated on this excellent little book. It is impossible to read it without feeling that the author is one who has lived among the

birds in the best sense of the phrase, has visited their breeding-haunts, studied their habits, and in short made himself thoroughly acquainted with their life-histories. We are sure that he must have experienced a feeling of regret at not being able, in the limited space at his disposal, to include the fuller details which filled his note-books to overflowing. The work is illustrated by 242 coloured plates, reduced from those of Lord Lilford, and with 65 photographic reproductions after Kearton, Miss Turner, and others. There are also plates of eggs after Hewitson, which are hardly so successful as the other figures.

The book begins with a useful Introduction, including a good essay on Bird Protection, and then goes on to well-written accounts of the various species. The only addition that we could desire is a brief sketch of the characters of each Family, such as is given under the Orders.

Mr. Coward's work is one of Frederick Warne's "Way-side and Woodland Series."

Harris on the Birds of Kansas City.

[Birds of the Kansas City Region. By Harry Harris. Trans. Acad. Sci. St. Louis, xxiii, 1919, pp. 213-371.]

Kansas City, though on the border of the State of the same name, is in Missouri, and is situated on the Missouri river at its junction with the Kaw. The chief characteristics of its bird-life are due to its position on the big river, which is the great highway of migration north and south.

Many of the birds formerly abundant in this region, and noted by the early travellers, have now become very scarce or have disappeared, such as the Wild Turkey, the Prairie Chicken, and the larger Birds of Prey; while the Passenger-Pigeon and the Carolina Paroquet are undoubtedly extinct. On the other hand, the clearing of the forest and cultivation of the land has resulted in an increase of such birds as the Dickcissel (*Spiza americana*) and the Blue Bird (*Sialia sialis*).

Mr. Harris has compiled a list of 343 birds found in this region. Of these 117 are breeding-birds. The status of

each species is given concisely, and additional notes on the dates of arrival, of nesting and other matters of interest make up a most satisfactory account of the birds of this interesting and now commercially important region of the middle west of the United States.

Hopkinson on Gambian Birds.

[A List of the Birds of the Gambia. By Emilius Hopkinson. Brighton, 1919. Pp. 1-32.]

This list is partly compiled from other works, and partly gives information from the writer's own experiences in the most northerly of the British Possessions in West Africa. It is at present only a first instalment, which it is hoped to continue. Little is given under the specific name except the range and status of each form, but a trustworthy list of the birds of such a country must always be useful.

Jaarbericht, No. 9 : Club van Nederlandsche Vogelkundigen.

In this year's bulletin we have articles on Netherland Ornithology, by Baron Snouckaert van Schauburg; on the question of the Origin of new Species by crossing, by Heer Stresemann; on the birds of Deli in Sumatra, by Heeren van Heyst, Van Balen, and others. There is also a sketch of the journey of Van Heurn between Java and America, as well as some remarks on *Buteo buteo ruficaudus* by Heer Heus.

Mathews on Australian Birds.

[The Birds of Australia. By Gregory M. Mathews. London: Feb. 16, 1920. Supplement No. 1, being Check-List of the Birds of Australia. Part I.—Orders Casuariiformes to Menuriformes.]

In this supplement Mr. Mathews gives under each genus and species every synonym known to him, with references to the Plates of his work and that of Gould. An attempt has been made, with the help of Dr. Richmond, to give the day on which each name was published, and we note that three new names are to be proposed in the next number of the 'Austral Avian Record.' The exact method of recording

the names—that is, the type used in each case—is fully explained in the Introduction.

Mullens, Swann, and Jourdain on Ornithological Bibliography.

[A Geographical Bibliography of British Ornithology from the earliest times to the end of 1918, arranged under Counties. In Six Parts. By W. H. Mullens, H. Kirke Swann, and Rev. F. C. R. Jourdain. London, 1919. Parts 1 & 2, pp. 1–192.]

The authors tell us that “this work forms a supplement to, or continuation of, Mullens and Swann’s ‘Bibliography of British Ornithology’ (Biographical volume), completed in 1917. It contains the books and articles in that volume arranged under counties, as well as a digest of the enormous mass of published contributions on local avifauna in scientific journals and periodical literature, of which very little indeed had been touched for the Biographical volume above mentioned.” The aim is to give as complete an account as possible of the literature and records of each country, and has involved the examination of thousands of books. When completed the work will be exceptionally useful, as the publications of Coues, Carus and Engelmann, and Agassiz have long been out of date.

Many omissions and mistakes in those works are now corrected, and it is thus hoped to secure great accuracy coupled with full information.

Nicoll on Egyptian Birds.

[Hand-list of the Birds of Egypt. By M. J. Nicoll, Assistant-Director Zoological Service, Ministry of Public Works, Egypt. Cairo, 1919. Pub. No. 29.]

Mr. Nicoll has furnished visitors to Egypt with a very useful list, which will aid them to name their specimens. He gives the Latin name which he considers most easily understood, as well as the English appellation. Then follows a short description and a statement of the localities where the bird is found, with references to the works of Shelley and Gurney. The author has formed a collection of some 4000 skins during the past thirteen years, and has

therefore the best of rights to his opinions on the avifauna. Thus his little book will be needed by all those in Europe who are working on Egyptian birds. Our only doubt is whether the descriptions are not too short for proper identification. Comparisons with allied species are not of themselves sufficient.

Robinson on Johore Fauna.

[Notes on the Vertebrate Fauna of the Pahang-Johore Archipelago. By H. C. Robinson. Journ. F.M.S. Museums, vii. pp. 325-329, pls. vi., vii.]

This short article gives a list of the birds of Pulau Tingyi, a mountainous island on the east of Johore, chiefly covered with heavy jungle. No new forms were obtained, but the author takes the opportunity of expressing his doubts as to the validity of certain subspecies of *Halcyon chloris* and two or three Passerine birds proposed by Mr. Oberholser. The plates are of island scenery.

Swann on the Birds of Prey.

[A Synoptical List of the Accipitres. Part II. (Erythrotriorehis to Lophoaëtus). By H. Kirke Swann. London, 1919. Pp. 39-74.]

Mr. Swann here continues his list of the diurnal Birds of Prey, the first part of which was fully noticed last year ('Ibis,' 1919, p. 777). He takes the opportunity to print some Addenda and Corrigenda to Part I. pp. 14-16.

Thorburn's Ornithological Sketches.

[A Naturalist's Sketch-Book. By Archibald Thorburn. London, 1919. 4to. Pp. i-viii, 1-71, pls. 1-60.]

The author here gives us a long series of beautiful illustrations of birds in his well-known style, interspersed with nearly a dozen of animals and plants. All of them are admirable, but we may specially call attention to those of Raptorial birds, Ducks, and Geese. We should have been glad to see a few more sketches of Terns, as we know that Mr. Thorburn has devoted considerable time to watching their evolutions and habits in general. Still, we are greatly

pleased with those that have been provided from the author's various sketch-books, representing the work of some thirty years. They are nearly all taken from life, and therefore show the pose and tricks of habit of the species in a way that can only be attained by patient watching. Twenty-four of the plates are coloured, the remainder in collotype, and the latter include one or two of the haunts of the wilder species.

Wood on the Bird's Eye.

[The Fundus oculi of Birds, especially as viewed by the Ophthalmoscope: a Study in Comparative Anatomy and Physiology. By Casey Albert Wood. Pp. 1-180; 145 text-figs.; 61 coloured paintings. Chicago (Lakeside Press), 1917. 4to.]

The subject of the comparative structure of the eye in Birds is one which has been but little studied, and we much regret that this beautiful work has escaped our attention for so long. Colonel Casey Wood is an ophthalmic surgeon, and one of the leaders of his profession in the United States. He is also a lover of birds and an ornithologist, and he has devoted his leisure to the study of the bird's eye by means of the ophthalmoscope, an instrument by which the varying appearance of the back of the eyeball can be examined. With the help of Mr. Arthur W. Head, a well-known London artist, he has obtained a series of paintings showing the appearance of *fundus* or back portion of the eye in fifty-eight species of birds, and three reptiles and batrachians, and the reproductions of these paintings form perhaps the most attractive feature of the volume.

The text deals with the general structure of the bird's eye and the methods of examination and study used, while in Chapter ix. the appearance of the *fundus oculi* in the various Orders of birds is reviewed.

Colonel Wood believes that the *pecten*, that curious finger-like growth of blood-vessels projecting from the spot where the optic nerve enters the eye into the vitreous humor, is nothing but a carrier of pabulum to the eye and has no nervous or sensory function. This organ, which is peculiar to the avian eye, has an infinite variation of form

and may possibly contribute characters of value in the classification of birds, as may also some of the other appearances of the *fundus oculi*. The other varying feature of the bird's eye is the position of the *macula lutea* or spot of perfect vision. In some cases there may be no apparent *macula lutea* at all; in other cases there are one or two of these spots, and it is among the birds which have the most perfect vision that two spots are developed. This is specially the case with the Accipitrine birds, which are able to adjust their eyes to monocular vision or to stereoscopic binocular vision at will, by the use of the two well-developed *macule*.

In addition to the paintings reproduced in colour, there are a great number of figures in the text elucidating the form of the *pecten* and the variation in the position of the *macule*.

The author believes that the eye of the bird is the most advanced and most highly specialized of all the organs of vision found in the class of Vertebrates, and that a study of the appearance of the back of the eye in healthy birds "may well furnish data for a classification of Aves ranking in importance with other taxonomic indications." Whether we agree with this conclusion or not, we may heartily congratulate Colonel Wood on having given us new light on a comparatively unknown department of ornithology, and of having enshrined it in a worthy and handsome volume.

List of other Ornithological Publications received.

- GLADSTONE, H. S. A Naturalist's Calendar, kept by Sir William Jardine.
- KURODA, N. Descriptions of three new Birds from the southern islands of Japan (*cf.* Ibis, 1919, p. 547).
- MATHEWS, G. M. Austral Avian Record. (Vol. iii, no. 8.)
Auk. (Vol. xxxvi, no. 4; Vol. xxxvii, no. 1.)
Avicultural Magazine. (Vol. x, nos. 12-14; Vol. xi, Nos. 1, 2.)
Bird-Notes. (Ser. 3, Vol. ii, nos. 11, 12.)
British Birds. (Oct.-Dec. 1919; Jan.-Mar. 1920.)
Canadian Naturalist. (Vol. xxxiii, nos. 4-6.)
Condor. (Vol. xxi, no. 5.)
Emu. (Vol. xix, pts. 1-3.)

Irish Naturalist. (Vol. xxviii. no. 9.)

Fauna och Flora. (1919, Häft 4.)

Journ. Bombay Nat. Hist. Soc. (Vol. xxvi. no. 3.)

Revue Française d'Ornithologie. (Nos. 126-129.)

Scottish Naturalist. (Nos. 93-98.)

XIX.—*Letters, Extracts, and Notes.*

DEAR SIR,—I would be glad if you would kindly correct an error which appears in my letter on "*Hieraëtus ayresi*," which was printed in the October number of 'The Ibis,' 1919. The concluding lines should read: "which proves to be barely *sixteen* inches in length, and not $17\frac{3}{4}$ inches as stated in my notes."

I am,

Yours faithfully,

Roberts Heights,
Pretoria.
6 December, 1919.

C. G. FINCH-DAVIES
(Lt. 1st S.A.M.R.).

DEAR SIR,—A short time ago the Director of the South African Museum kindly sent me for examination the skin of a small Falcon, purporting to be a juvenile of the African Hobby *Falco cuvieri*. As soon as I saw the specimen it struck me that this was no Hobby, the wings being too short for any species of that group; and on further examining it I came to the conclusion that it was a young male of *Falco aesalon*. To make sure I took the specimen down to the Transvaal Museum for comparison with some young males of *F. aesalon* from Europe, and found it to agree with them in every respect. It is in the first juvenile plumage, which is not much worn. There are two feathers of the adult plumage amongst the upper tail-coverts, which are blue-grey with the characteristic dark shaft marks.

This specimen is labelled as having been procured at Durban, Natal. The question arises, is this locality correct; if so, it would mean an extraordinary extension of the range of this species, which, according to the latest B. O. U. List of British Birds, has not been recorded from further south in Africa than Nubia and Abyssinia.